

Adams, Lisa

From: Mastel, Tara <tara.mastel@montana.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 06, 2013 4:33 PM
To: Adams, Lisa
Subject: Too late to voice support for Main Street Program this morning

Dear Ms. Adams,

I am writing to voice my support for the Montana Main Street program. I got to the hearing this morning too late to be able to testify. I wanted to let the committee know how important Main Street is to me as an economic developer and to my efforts to make rural Montana as vital as it can be.

As an economic developer, I need as many tools in my tool box as I can to be able to help communities and businesses. Without these types of programs, I have nothing but talk to support my community and businesses.

The Main Street program has provided my community with essential tools we need to sustain and improve our small towns. These tools are not available elsewhere.

With Main Street's help, towns in Jefferson County have had access to the following things:

- Assistance with creating a **funding source for downtown infrastructure improvements** through the establishment of an Urban Renewal District in Whitehall.
- Received funding for an essential study required for a **\$1.5 Million renovation** of the largest building in Whitehall thanks to being directed to the opportunity by the Main Street program.
- **Training for main street business owners** through the annual Main Street Conference.
- **Tailored board training for Boulder** to help revitalize the business and volunteer base.
- **Tailored board training for Whitehall** regarding legalities of operating a non-profit organization.
- **Immediate analysis of fire damaged buildings** by structural engineer after Whitehall's downtown fire of 2009.

As main street is the vital center of each of our rural communities, so is the Montana Main Street Program for those of us working to make our rural communities vital. Please support the continuation of the program.

Thank you for considering adding Main Street back into HB 2.

Tara Mastel

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